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THE UNION AND THE WAR.

A

SERMON,

PREACHED NOVEMBER 27, 1862.

BY

WILLIAM G. T. SHEDD, D. D.,

ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF THE BRICK PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK.

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THE UNION AND THE WAR.

"THE Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me." —PSALM cxviii. 6, 7.

THIS is a portion of a psalm that was indited, most probably, by King David, to be sung upon a day of thanksgiving by the people of Israel, as they moved in solemn and jubilant procession to the temple of the Most High, to offer praise for a great national deliverance. We do not know the particular occasion, the precise victory, that inspired this sacred anthem. Some commentators, as Tholuck, for example, think they find internal evidence within it, that proves conclusively that David could not have been its author, and that it belongs to a period subsequent to the captivity. But there are many chapters in the life of the

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royal harper, especially his early and middle life, that were well fitted to inspire such a psalm of deliverance; and it accords well with many similar thanksgivings in the book of Psalms that are universally ascribed to his authorship. But, be this as it may, it is an inspired lyric that expresses clearly and strongly the jubilance of the people of God, when his arm has wrought deliverance for them; and in every age it has been an anthem through which they have uttered their praises when the right hand of the Lord was exalted, and when the right hand of the Lord did valiantly for his church. It is a thanksgiving psalm for a nation, and for an individual. Those heroes of the Christian church, those confessors, martyrs, and reformers, who have been called to great sorrows and to great triumphs in their own individual experiences, have betaken themselves to this one hundred and eighteenth psalm as the trumpet through which they sounded out their glorying in the God that had helped them and had given them the victory. Martin Luther, we are told, appropriated this psalm for his peculiar comfort, and wrote the seventeenth verse of it ("I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord") upon the walls of his study, saying, "This is my

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psalm which I love. Though I love all the psalms and the Scriptures, and regard them as the comfort of my life, yet I have had such experience of this psalm, that it must remain, and shall be called, *my* psalm; for it has been very precious to me, has delivered me out of many troubles, and without it neither emperor, kings, the wise and prudent, nor saints, could have helped me." *

If you will carefully read this psalm, you will observe that the strong and firm foundation upon which the rejoicing and the thanksgiving rest is the fact, *that God had been upon the side of the victors;* and this implies that truth and right were upon their side. David and the people of Israel did not rejoice merely because they had "quenched" the nations that had "compassed them about like bees," as a man quenches the flashy "fire of thorns." It was not the secular and religious rejoicing of a warlike people over a great victory and a new conquest, without any regard to the right and wrong of the war, without any reference to the moral principles that were involved in the contest. It was no merely Roman triumph, stretching many a mile with spoils and

* Tholuck on the Psalms, in loco.

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captives, adding another province to the immense pagan despotism of the old world, and ministering afresh to the pride and glory of an earthly domination. It was a Jewish triumph, a theocratic victory, gained by the favor of Jehovah, founded in a righteous cause, and subserving the interests of that spiritual kingdom of which the Son of God, and the Son of David, is the Lord and King. The Roman general stood in a triumphal chariot, attired in a gold-embroidered robe, bearing in his right hand a laurel bough and in his left a sceptre, and his brows encircled with an oaken garland. He was the central figure in the pomp, and the few religious ceremonies that accompanied the procession, as it moved up to the Capitol and "Jove's eternal fane," were all eclipsed and lost in the adulations offered to a mortal. But the king of Israel went on foot, with the priests and the people, clothed in the simple linen tunic, the girdle, and the mitre, and his utterance was: "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. Let Israel now say that his mercy endureth forever. Let the house of Aaron now say that his mercy endureth forever. The Lord is on my side. The Lord taketh my part with them that help me. It is better to trust

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in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." It is the utterance, not of a proud and self-conscious emperor, but of a servant of the Most High, in meekness and thankfulness ascribing glory to him from whom all glories are.

We have selected this text because it very naturally conducts us to a series of reflections that are appropriate to the circumstances in which we assemble at the call of our Chief Magistrate, to offer thanksgiving to God. For some of the circumstances are peculiar and sad. We are invited to be glad and thankful in the midst of the most melancholy and exhausting of wars, a civil war. Yet the invitation is a reasonable one. For there is no condition of man here upon earth in which he does not enjoy some blessings; in which he does not receive more than he deserves; in which, therefore, it becomes him to render thanks to the Providence that has made him what he is, and has given him what he has. And it is a fact that the most genuine praise and thanksgiving ascend from those hearts which in the eye of the world have the least to be thankful for. St. Paul chained to a soldier, and with the chains clanking upon his hands as he lifted them in adoration, cried to all suffering Christians: "Rejoice

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in the Lord ; and again I say, rejoice." And this is true of nations as well as individuals. There is no people upon the earth, whatever may be their condition, who have not received from God infinitely beyond their deservings. He maketh his sun to shine upon the evil and the good, and sendeth his rain upon the just and the unjust, and therefore the gates of the temple of thanksgiving should never be shut, either in prosperity or adversity, either in peace or in war.

As a nation, we have certainly to be grateful for abundant harvests, for universal health, and for amicable relations with the other nations of the earth. These blessings were never more bountifully bestowed upon us than at this very moment. But we are at war among ourselves. Tens of thousands of our fellow countrymen have been hurried to the judgment seat of God ; hundreds of thousands of hearts are bleeding for the loss of husbands, fathers, and sons ; and millions of national wealth have been destroyed. What is there connected with this civil war in the United States of America that can possibly be matter of thankfulness ? Is there any silver lining to this black cloud ? That there is enough for fasting and humiliation in the present state of the country, none will dispute. But is

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there anything in the present contest that furnishes matter for devout and intelligent thanksgiving to Almighty God? We propose to answer this question. Fully alive to the evils of the war, and believing that it is one of those "offences" which our Lord affirms must "needs come" in a world of sinful and passionate men, and upon the authors of which he denounces a woe, temporal and eternal, we think, nevertheless, that there are some features and results of it, for which it becomes all the loyal people of the land to be thankful. We think there are some characteristics in this contest that warrant every loyal American in saying: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me."

1. In the first place, we should give thanks to God, because *this war has been the occasion of deepening and strengthening the feeling of nationality.*

The relation of the individual to the State, of the American citizen to the American Union, never had a fuller or a deeper significance than now. The present civil war, and the existing struggle for national existence, throw a flood of light upon a class of truths which have been almost lost out of sight

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in the past years of peace, plenty, and increasing luxury. Since the War of Independence, by which we became a nation, and the naval war with England, by which our nationality was made respectable before the world, the people of the United States have been too little tried by severe and sharp experiences for a solid and well-compacted growth. The nation has made too rapid territorial advance for the best prosperity, and the Prophet Isaiah might say of us as he did of his own people: "Thou hast multiplied the nation, and not increased the joy." The same inexorable laws of national well-being have operated in our instance, as they did in that of ancient Rome. So long as the Roman could carry his nationality along with his conquests; so long as the energy of the Latin people was able to pervade the new elements that were received by the subjugation of provinces, and could assimilate them—so long all was well. But when the bulk became too large to be thus permeated by the forces that issued from that wonderful nucleus of national life that was established on the Seven Hills, by the union of the Latin with the Sabine blood; when the extent of conquered territory became so vast that it must be controlled and managed by standing armies, and so complex that it embraced all varieties

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of religion and civilization, then it fell apart by its own weight. While Rome was a kingdom and a republic, she was a nation, and possessed a national life and strength. When she became an empire she lost her nationality, and her decline and fall came on apace.

Our nationality has not yet been destroyed, but it has been weakened by the operation of similar causes. We have added greatly to our territory, and not in every instance in that just and God-fearing manner in which the Pilgrims obtained possession of Massachusetts, and William Penn obtained Pennsylvania. The Old World has poured in upon us its tens of thousands. This influx of foreign elements has been imperfectly assimilated, and, what is far worse, has been the occasion of engendering great political corruption by the continual endeavor of political parties to secure their weight and influence in the ever recurring elections of the country. The original diversity of interests, occupations, and institutions, between the North and the South, the two great halves of the one great whole, instead of disappearing, as was expected and desired by the fathers of the Constitution, became intense and exaggerated. Internal migration itself ran upon lines of latitude, and not in the least upon

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lines of longitude, so that the country presented to the eye of the foreign spectator two streams of population, and of tendencies, directly antagonistic, and which, refusing to blend, flowed side by side, as the Ottawa flows beside the St. Lawrence. From these causes our nationality grew feebler from year to year, and was rapidly becoming, as one of the old grammarians remarks of the style of Seneca, "sand without lime." This imperfect consolidation of the Federal Government, and this growing diversity of feelings and interests between the two geographical sections, became the occasion of an open rupture and a civil war.

But that war has wakened anew the declining consciousness of nationality in the American people. It is the only unifying principle that now binds them together in their agony, and their victory. Destroy it, and the army breaks ranks immediately, and "resolves its mystic unity into the breathing atoms," that were gathered at the call of the bugle from the whole surface of the land. Destroy the sense of a national life, wider than that of the individual, and higher than that of any one of the single minor sovereignties that compose the American UNION, and anarchy immediately begins. It is this simple, grand, master feeling that now

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overtops all others, and causes the American people, who are the most conflicting of any in their local views, and the most pertinacious of any in their private opinions, to present an undivided front and a solid column against treason and rebellion. Men of the most diverse social, political, and religious sentiments; men who differ greatly from one another respecting the causes of the rebellion; men who will be found to differ greatly from one another upon the grave and difficult questions that will arise when the rebellion is quelled, and the whole American people are once more assembled, by their representatives, in the national Congress; men of all classes, conditions, and opinions have rallied with the unanimity of a single mind, and the determination of a single will, under that same flag that flung its rippling lines over the armies of Washington. They are fighting for the very same Constitution (not altered in a single syllable, and never to be altered hereafter, except by constitutional modes and methods) by which the original thirteen States became an organized nation, and into which all the rest have been grafted as living branches of the living vine.

This is something to be thankful for. It is a token of good from God, of favorable designs of the

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Supreme Arbiter, in relation to the country. For, had he decreed to break it in pieces, he would not have wakened it to such a consciousness. He would have permitted the existing differences and dissensions, already many and great, to become distracting and dividing, and, as in the instance of the builders of Babel, would have prevented all unity and concert of action. But under his favoring providence, everything from the very opening of the war has conspired to widen, deepen, and strengthen the national sentiment and the national enthusiasm. It is stronger to-day than ever. The determination of the people at home, and the people in the camp, that "the Union must and shall be preserved," is now as firm and positive as it was in the will of that iron President who gave this motto to his countrymen. The maritime and manufacturing population of New England, the calm, central masses of the Middle States, the prodigious energies of the West and Northwest, the gallantry and great self-sacrifice of the Border sovereignties, are all now massed and combined together as they never have been before. Could those two great statesmen, who understood the genius of the American Constitution better than any except its founders and framers, and whose eloquence, from youth to old

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age, was inspired by the idea of an *American nationality*, more than by any other idea—could Webster and Clay revisit the earthly arena upon which they toiled and struggled, they would find that the master truth of their statesmanship and their oratory, is now, at length, the dominant and living thought of the people. The masses have at last reached the height of their great argument; and that sentiment of Union, for which they plead, and for which one of them lost his almost omnipotent local influence, while his name and his fame became all the more historic and universal, is now the sober and undying conviction of the day and the era.

2. In the second place, we should render profound and hearty thanks to Almighty God, on this day, because *the American Government is not waging an unjust war for foreign conquest, but a righteous war against domestic treason and rebellion.*

The demoralizing influence of national ambition, and of the wars that spring out of it, is universally conceded. When a nation is seized with the lust of conquest, and begins a military career for purposes of self-aggrandizement, the real patriot will weep bitterer tears over the fictitious and accursed glory that results, than over

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famine and pestilence. The American people, within the past twenty years, have shown some indications of such a temper, and had their career of prosperity been uninterrupted, it may have been that they would have formed no exception to the general rule, that increase of power renders a nation arrogant, and would have fallen into the same class of examples with ancient Macedon and Rome, and modern France and England.

But as yet we have entered upon no such career of injustice and blood. On the contrary, we may hope that the present severe experience of the nation will exterminate all unlawful aspirations, and leave it sober, circumspect, and humble under the chastising hand of God. This certainly is the tendency of the lesson of the hour; and if the people shall not thoroughly learn it; if, after they shall have emerged successfully from this intestine struggle, they shall seek collision with foreign nations, and aim at an empire to extend from the Great Bear to the Southern Cross, the vials of wrath will be poured out to their destruction and annihilation.

This is not a war for foreign conquest. It is a war against treason within the realm; as clearly so as those wars by which Great Britain has pre-

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vented Scotland and Ireland from becoming independent sovereignties, whenever factions and rebellions have been organized to accomplish this end. For the plea of the leaders of that alien government which has been constructed upon our southern borders, that they have the same right to demand and establish an independent existence, separate from the United States, that our common forefathers had when they achieved their independence, will not bear a moment's inspection. In the first place, the thirteen States which revolted against the government of Great Britain were distant colonies, separated from the mother country by three thousand miles of water; but the nine or ten States that have seceded from the American Union, without consulting the remaining partners in the compact,* are tied to the Union by geo-

* Upon the theory that the Constitution is simply a *compact* between the States, the doctrine of the right of each State to be the sole judge of its grievances, and to secede from the Union at will, and by its own isolated action, is untenable. For a compact, when entered into, immediately changes the status and relations of the parties. It is a cession of a certain amount of personal sovereignty for value received, which amount of sovereignty cannot be resumed *without consent of parties.* A capitalist is not obliged to enter into partnership, but having voluntarily done so, he is no longer the entirely sovereign and independent person, in respect to his capital, that he was before. He

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graphical ligaments as close, strong, and vital as the spinal cord in the human frame. The original thirteen States, furthermore, constituted no portion

must hold it subject to the instrument or compact of partnership. In like manner, the State of South Carolina, e. g., upon entering into the Union, lost her status as a separate and independent sovereignty, because she solemnly bound herself to abide by the "constitutional compact" which she had voluntarily adopted, subject to revision and amendment by a majority of two thirds of Congress, and three fourths of the State legislatures. By adopting the Constitution, her condition and obligations became like those of a giver of a note or bond. The giving of the bond is optional; but *having been given*, its terms and promises must be kept.

Furthermore, the fact that a State must be admitted into the Union by a vote, proves that it cannot leave it but by a vote. It would be as absurd to allow Ohio to go out of the Union at will, and by its own isolated action, as it would have been for it to enter the Union in such a manner. The evils of allowing a person to enter a mercantile partnership, without any action by a majority of the partners, would be no greater than those that would result from allowing him to leave it without any such action. Secession from the Union by independent State action, would justify accession to it by the same method. If mere self-will and self-interest, without any regard to the will and interests of the constituted majority, may rule in the former instance, why not in the latter? Says Mr. Madison: "It surely does not follow from the fact that the States, or rather the people embodied in them, have, as parties to the constitutional compact, no tribunal above them, that in controverted meanings of the compact, a *minority* of the parties can rightfully decide against the *majority;* still less that a *single party* can at will *withdraw itself altogether from its compact with the rest.*"

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of that European State-System of which Great Britain was an important member. Their career and their destiny would not sensibly affect the balance of power in the Old World, for they were out of all relations to it. But the States of Virginia and Louisiana, by their geography, are as intimately identified with the American Union, are as inextricably involved in it, as the counties of Middlesex and Yorkshire are with the three kingdoms that constitute Great Britain. It was one thing for thirteen distant colonies to declare their independence of the British empire, and a very different thing for an English county to do this. A new nation might spring into being three thousand miles from the island of Great Britain, without danger either to the British constitution, or to the system of European States, and, as it turned out, with great benefit to them both; but a new and alien government, constituted out of an organic and integral part of the very island itself, would have been the annihilation of the English power and the English realm.

But again, the alleged parallelism between the two instances fails in another most important particular. The thirteen colonies were not equal members of a democratic republic, but inferior de-

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pendencies upon a monarchy flushed with power, and fenced with the descending orders of nobility. They revolted from the mother country simply and solely because they had no representation upon the floor of the British Parliament. It was not the tax upon tea ; it was not the stamp act ; it was not any very great aversion to a monarchical form of government, as such, that fired the heart of our Revolutionary fathers. The statement of Webster is strictly true : "They went to war against a preamble. They fought seven years against a declaration." In the phraseology of the most beautiful and magnificent period that ever dropped from those charmed lips : "On a question of *principle*, while actual suffering was yet afar off, they raised their flag against a power, to which, for purposes of foreign conquest and subjugation, Rome, in the height of her glory, is not to be compared ; a power which has dotted over the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts, whose morning drum-beat following the sun, and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of the martial airs of England." It was simply the refusal to place the people of the colonies upon the *same footing* with the people of the mother country,—giving

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them the same constitutional rights and privileges, no more and no less,—that led our forefathers to throw off their allegiance, and establish an independent government. Had this reasonable demand been conceded, the brightest of its jewels might not have dropped from the English crown, and to this day we might have been Englishmen, under a hereditary monarchy, and as proud of the rich and glorious history of England as we now are of our own brilliant and striking career. The wise men of that time, the Burkes and the Chathams, knew this, and saw this ; but the wisdom of these statesmen was overborne by the folly of those politicians who happened (as it has happened since) to be in the ascendant at a critical instant. The people of the seceding States can make no such complaint as this. They were not colonies and dependencies of a monarchical Empire. They were members of a democratic Union. They had an equal, and in one particular, a superior, representation in the national Congress, with those States whom they now charge with being their tyrants and their invaders, and whom they would compare with that aristocratic and arbitrary parliament that denied to Massachusetts and South Carolina any participation in the common deliberations and decisions of the British realm.

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In these two facts, then, namely: that the Confederate States are as geographically connected with the American Union as an English county is with the island of Great Britain, and that they have a common representation and vote in the national councils, we find the proof that this war has no analogy with that by which our fathers gained their independence, but is simply a domestic rebellion upon one side, and the exertion of constitutional power upon the other. The United States of America are engaged in suppressing the treason of a portion of the population, and defeating their attempt to overthrow the common Government. There is no intention of depriving any loyal State, or any loyal citizen, of a single iota of his constitutional rights. It is a war to maintain a common Constitution and preserve a democratic government.*

* The declarations of the President and Congress of the United States, prove this assertion. The Inaugural Address of President Lincoln contained the following passage:

"Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the Southern States, that by the accession of a Republican Administration, their property, and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but

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And at this point another fact stares us in the face that goes to strengthen the positions that have been taken, and to prove still more convincingly that this war is a righteous one upon the side of the Government, and a guilty one upon that of its enemies. There is no necessity of redressing grievances, either real or imaginary, under a democratic government, by the awful method of war. *The right of armed revolution does not hold good in a democracy.* When a people are governing themselves by universal suffrage; when no portion of them is made inferior by the law and constitution of the land to any other portion; when neither birth, nor wealth, nor even education and religion,

quote from one of those speeches when I declare that 'I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I have no inclination to do so.' Those who nominated and elected me, did so with a full knowledge that I had made this and many other similar declarations, and had never recanted them."

And the last Congress passed the following resolution of Mr. Crittenden, affirming—

"That this war is not waged in any spirit of oppression, or for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, or purpose of overthrowing, or interfering with the rights or established institutions of any State, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution, and to preserve the Union, with all the dignity, equality and rights of the several States unimpaired, and that as soon as these objects are accomplished, the war ought to cease."

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give any superior political power or privilege to a class or a section, it is the sheerest self-will and the blackest of crimes, for a portion of the people to plunge the whole land into the horrors of war, for the removal of either real or imaginary grievances. If the political constitution of a country gives certain political rights to some of the citizens or some of the sections, and denies them to the remainder; if the citizens or the sections are not equal in the eye of the organic law of the realm; then the right of armed revolution is a valid one. For then there is no mode of redressing grievances, in the last resort, but by war. It cannot be done by universal and equal suffrage, and therefore it must be done by gunpowder and cannon. The axiom that armed revolution is justifiable has grown up in the Old World, which is a world of unequal rights, a world of aristocracies, of monarchies, and of despotisms, and it is undoubtedly true there; but when it travels across the Atlantic, and comes into a new world of democratic ideas, and purely representative sovereignties, and universal suffrage, it ceases to be true: it is no longer an axiom.

For even if a majority should prove tyrannical, and trample on the vested rights of a minority, their triumph can be only temporary. It is not

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supposable that from year to year, and from one generation to another, the preponderance will continue to be upon the side of injustice and wrong, in a country where universal suffrage prevails. Even when no critical questions are to be decided, even in the ordinary politics of popular government, the triumph is continually oscillating from one side to the other. No majority maintains itself as such from generation to generation. One administration goes and another comes, but the republic abides continually. Much less will a majority continue to hold power from year to year, when its victory is founded on a breach of constitutional rights, and results in tyranny and injustice toward the minority of the nation. It is, therefore, always the duty of the lesser portion to wait calmly for the sober second thought of the nation, of which it is an integral part. The resort to the horrors of war can never be justified under a republican government, where the will of the people, and not the power of a king, and peerage, and privileged classes, is the sovereign arbiter. The Southern States of the American Union needed only to bide their time, to enjoy their entire constitutional and vested rights. We say this the more readily, because, though we cannot concede the reality of all their alleged grievances,

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we nevertheless sympathized deeply, and still sympathize, with that portion of the people who believe that the American Constitution is a compromise between opposing views, and that the true politics for the whole nation lies in that general line of direction. But the reckless and guilty rush to arms for the redress of grievances; the repudiation of the national symbol; the erection of another government in the very heart of the land, and the gathering of armies to uphold it; all this immediately made it the first and only duty of every patriot to put down domestic treason, and again lift up the national flag where it had been struck down.

But if the unrighteousness of this armed rebellion of the Southern States is clearly evident from the position of democracy, it is still more so from that of Christianity. It cannot be justified, in the least, on the principles of the gospel. Were the rights of conscience involved, and were there no peaceable mode of securing them through the ballot box; were it an instance in which a Philip II. were attempting to force the doctrines of the Papacy upon a Protestant province and dependency: then armed resistance would not only be allowable, but it would be blessed and crowned with glory and

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immortality, by the Lord and Head of the Church himself. In such a case, he says to his servants: "He that hath no sword, let him sell his garment and buy one." But the rights of conscience are not touched in the least, in this conflict. The questions that are involved are purely political, certainly so far as the aims of the leaders of the rebellion are concerned. It will not be pretended that they have plunged the whole country into war, for the purpose of improving the moral and religious condition of the Southern people, and of the four millions of slaves who are in bondage to them. It is true that the wrath of man will praise God in this as in every instance, and this war will undoubtedly result in moral and religious benefit to the Northern and Southern citizen, and to the Southern slave, but so far as the purposes of the Confederate politicians are concerned, it is a purely political war, and stands in no connection with either ethics or Christianity. It is not even a struggle for personal liberty, which, in the eye of Christianity, is a matter of secondary importance, provided the soul can enjoy the liberty wherewith "Christ maketh free."

Even if the South had been despoiled of certain democratic rights and privileges, St. Paul might say to them as he said to the Christian bondman as

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he sat at the table of the Lord, and looked forward to a higher citizenship than that of earth: "Art thou called being a servant? *care not for it.*" Rights and privileges that appear of highest importance from a political point of view, sometimes become of secondary consequence from the Christian position; and a war that would be justified by the principles of mere democracy, might be condemned altogether by the precepts of the gospel. And it is precisely here, that we affirm, with all confidence, that the attitude of the Southern *Church* has been wrong. Knowing the principles by which the proud natural man is actuated, we could not expect that the passionate and imperious Southron would turn the left cheek, in case he had been smitten upon the right. We do not expect, in the history of the world, that unregenerate human nature will be actuated by those meek and forgiving sentiments that belong to the children of God. But we had a right to expect that the Church of Christ in the Southern States would not be in the very van of the rebellion; that their heavenly charity would suffer long, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, and enduring all things. Even accepting the Southern judgment respecting the points in dispute, and the Southern estimate of grievances, it

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still remains true that the principles of the gospel forbade the employment of "wars and fightings" to settle them. If a disciple of Christ meets even with insult and abuse in the streets of Charleston, or of New York, his religion forbids him to render railing for railing, or to return blow for blow. Except in the extreme instance of saving his very life itself, he is prohibited from shedding human blood, and taking human life. The same principle applies to war, and the relation which the Church should sustain to it. But we have already showed and proved that no such *dire necessity* of war overhung the democratic institutions, and democratic populations of either South or North; and therefore it follows inexorably, that when the Southern Church descended from its high position, above the passions of the world, and trailed its white robes in that secular and unhallowed procession which kindled the fires of intestine and fratricidal war, it incurred a fearful guilt before its Lord and its Judge. Instead of feeding the passions of the high-strung, chivalrous, but ambitious and unregenerate masses amidst whom it had been planted, the Southern Church ought to have allayed them. She ought to have stood firm upon the position of the gospel, and to have cried with clear commanding voice to the

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multitude and their leaders: "Forgive your enemies; if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink. From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence even of your lusts that war in your members? Ye lust and have not: ye kill and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, *because ye ask not.*" It was the method of peace, of forbearance, and of charity, that ought to have been urged by the Christians of the South, in that time when madness ruled the hour; and for this method, if need be, they ought even to have dared to die. And had there been this Christian daring, the reward might have been that civic garland which is hung upon the brow of him who gains the victories of peace, which are greater than the victories of war. The judgment that issued from this pulpit, one year ago, from lips and wisdom that have done so much to guide the councils of a Church that is second to none in weight and influence through the whole land, is undoubtedly true: "A little firmness on the part of our Southern brethren would have 'chained the dogs of war,' and saved the country."

3. In the third place, the judgment and attitude of the American people and Government dur-

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ing this civil war, respecting the system of slavery, is a reason for thanksgiving to God. Upon this difficult and exciting subject they have avoided the two extremes, into which particular parties, both in this country and abroad, have fallen. In the first place, the mass of the nation and their rulers have rejected with an instantaneous decision the doctrine that slavery is right and righteous in itself. They deny that it stands upon the same basis with the institutions of the family, the state, and the church. The doctrine that human bondage is ordained of God, and founded in natural right, has obtained no advocates among those to whom the guidance of our national affairs has been committed. Upon this point, the mass of the people and their rulers stand with the fathers and framers of the Constitution; our enemies themselves being judges. For it is the declaration of the Vice-President of the Southern Confederacy, that the lapse of time and further illumination have enabled the architects of the new political structure to correct the judgment of our common ancestors upon this subject. The position which the American people and their Government have taken before God and the world, is that the system of human bondage is an unjust one; that it could not exist in a perfect world; and that the

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progress of Christianity will invariably destroy it wherever it exists. This of itself proves that it has no foundation in the ordinance of God, or in the natural rights which he has established. The Christian religion will root up no plant which the Heavenly Father has planted. Whatever is abstractly right and righteous, whatever is ordained of God, will live through the millennium, and to the great burning day.

But, on the other hand, the American people and Government have not been able to see that an instantaneous emancipation of the four millions in bondage would be best either for them or for the nation with whose weal and woe they are connected. On the contrary, they look to a gradual method, that shall prepare them for freedom and self-government. They desire that slavery should be removed at the South, as it was at the North, by the voluntary action of the States themselves. A compulsory reform, even if it is possible, is undesirable. The slave owner must himself, of his own free will, manumit his bondmen. And it is in this reference, that the maintenance of the American Union is of untold importance. The future welfare of the black man, as well as the white man, depends upon the per-

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petuity of the *United* States of America. In the three quarters of a century during which the evil of slavery has existed under the American Constitution, a process of amelioration has been going on, which, if unchecked, will inevitably secure its final removal. It required several centuries to eradicate human bondage from the ancient Christendom; but fifty years more of such influences and tendencies as were at work when the North and the South met in a harmonious Congress, and the great questions of the country were discussed in a comprehensive and national style and temper, would result in the substantial emancipation of the African race. This blessed consummation now hangs upon the restoration of the Union. If the country is dismembered, and a Southern Confederacy is established, the future of the slave is overhung with black darkness. But if the North and the South shall be again united upon the ancient constitutional basis, the Federal Government being acknowledged as supreme within its sphere, while yet the rights reserved to the several States are not infringed upon in the least, then "the era of good feeling" will dawn once more, the difficult problems will be examined in that conciliatory temper which characterized the discussions that accompanied the

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formation and adoption of the Constitution, and a way of escape out of his bondage will be discovered for the African, that will cause no exasperation, and shed no human blood.

It is matter of devout thanksgiving to God, in whose hand are the hearts of all men, that the American people and Government are standing upon this position. Thomas Jefferson, after describing the evil nature and influence of the system of human bondage, enforces all that he has advanced upon this point, by the remark, "I tremble for my country when I remember that God is just." Well might every American tremble for the result of this civil war, if the people and Government stood before God and the world, as do the leaders of the Southern rebellion, affirming the inherent righteousness of human bondage, and laying it down as the corner stone of a political edifice. But they are no such advocates of a system which has been condemned and rejected by all the other civilized nations of the world, and upon which the frown of Divine Providence manifestly rests. They desire its removal, they look to its removal, and they are ready to pour out their treasure without stint to accomplish it. At the same time they remember that it is not like an individual sin,

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which, because it is confined to a single person, can be put away by a volition. It is an hereditary corruption, organized into human societies and relationships, which it requires time and long-continued effort to perfectly eliminate. They also bear in mind that the States most directly concerned should have a voice in respect to the ways and the means, should come into the common councils of the nation and deliberate, and should then legislate upon it precisely as did the States of New York and Massachusetts when they put away the evil from among them.

Such, then, are some of the reasons for thanksgiving in this time of rebellion and civil war. Such are some of the grounds for hoping and believing that that Supreme Arbiter, who sets up and pulls down the nations of the earth, as it pleases him, is upon the side of the American people and Government in their endeavor to prevent a dissolution of their Union, and the long-continued wars and anarchy that must result from such a catastrophe. The consciousness that we are, and must continue to be, one nation and people, has been evoked and strengthened by the conflict. Our armies are not seeking to conquer any foreign country, but simply to preserve the boundaries of

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the United States intact. They are battling solely to maintain the authority of the Constitution—an instrument of remarkable political wisdom, well adapted to secure the interests of all sections of the land, and under whose benign influences all sections have enjoyed a singular peace and prosperity for seventy-five years. And, lastly, they are not fighting to perpetuate forever the system of human slavery, but to preserve a Government and an order of things, under which that system has been gradually waning in power and influence, and through which alone it can be ultimately abolished.

If these things are so; if we have not erred in our judgment, may not every loyal American take up, humbly yet confidently, the utterance of the Psalmist: "The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me." While the people and their rulers ought to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, for the pride, the vain-glory, and the self-confidence which have brought these terrible judgments upon them, we verily think that they should give thanks to God, that so far as the *principles* that underlie this civil war are concerned, they are in the right,

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and their enemies are in the wrong. We believe that the time will come when our Southern fellow countrymen will see that this rebellion was needless, was reckless, was unrighteous; that the Constitution which their fathers adopted, and to which they themselves had sworn allegiance, had power and virtue enough in it to secure the rights of all sections of the nation; and that they needed only to bide their time, and give it a full trial, to find it what Washington denominated it, "the palladium of their political safety and prosperity." * We believe that the time is coming, when the sentiments of the Father of his country, as enunciated in his "Farewell Address," respecting the *sacredness of the Constitution*, and the obligation of all the people to respect its provisions, will be read in the light of this rebellion with calm joy by those who have stood by the Union, and with shame and sorrow by those who have struck at its life. "The Constitution," says Washington, "which at any time exists, *till changed by an explicit act of the whole people, is sacredly obligatory upon all.*" †

Confessing with deep humility our national sins, we may nevertheless be thankful, upon this day,

* Farewell Address. † Idem.

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